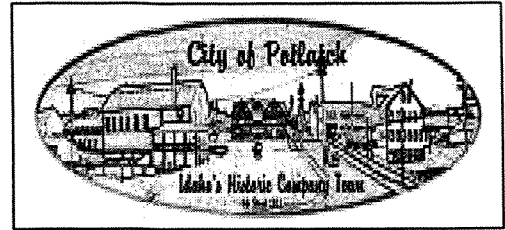


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JAN 29 2004

Department of Water Resources

CITY OF POTLATCH
P O BOX 525
POTLATCH, ID 83855



January 25, 2004

Mr. Karl Dreher
Idaho Dept. of Water Resources
1301 North Orchard St.
Boise, Idaho 83766

Dear Mr. Dreher,

We here in Potlatch have been watching with great interest the ongoing discussion regarding the possible designation of the Grande Ronde and the Wanapum aquifers here in Latah County as Critical Ground Water Management and Ground Water Management Areas respectively. We are viewing these possible designations with some concern, as well, as we realize the impact, which this could have on the future of both our county and of the City of Potlatch.


We understand it to have been the case that your office was petitioned for these designations by citizen's groups in the Moscow area in order to address the problem of water shortage there. We also are aware of the fact that the City of Moscow has been working diligently with the Palouse Basin Aquifer Committee in order to study and find solutions to the problem for some time. Plans have been devised and implemented by way of water management and conservation, which have proven to be effective. By some accounts the Grande Ronde aquifer has in fact stabilized over recent years. While all of their efforts have not been 100% successful to the point of completely solving the water problem in Moscow, certainly the critical stage has not as yet been reached at which point designation as "critical management" at the State level is required in our view. Thus we regard the initial petition for this designation to have been premature at this time.

Additionally we wish to state that the City of Potlatch draws its water from a separate aquifer than does the City of Moscow. Our aquifer is in the Onaway basalt group, which is composed of much older rock than either the Grand Ronde or the Wanapum. According to studies done here in 1980 and again in 1989, our aquifer was reportedly stable. We have no recent evidence to indicate that it has dropped since then. We do have a problem relative to water, however, albeit of a different kind than in Moscow. We are now losing approximately one third of the water being pumped due to leaking from

our old water system. Also, fully one third of our city is experiencing water pressure problems. To address this we are now in the midst of the preliminary process necessary in order to completely replace our water system. Our grant writer and our project engineer have been working on the project for the past year. Eighty per cent of the voters approved it. In April we go before the Governor's Economics and Advisory Committee to request Department of Commerce funding. If this funding is granted, we will then be able to tighten up our city water system to the point that no water is lost. Also, depth transducers and chart logs will be placed on each of our wells by way of being pro-active in monitoring this valuable natural resource.

Finally, we wish to state respectfully that it is the position of Potlatch City Government that the City of Moscow should be allowed to continue its work with PBAC in its pursuit of a solution to the water situation there. When taken in its totality, Latah County is not 'water impaired'. A good argument could be made that it is in fact 'water rich' as compared to other counties in Idaho. Therefore, we feel that the designation of the Grande Ronde or the Wanapum Aquifer as either Critical Ground Water Management Areas or Ground Water Management Areas does not resonate with the needs of our county at large, either presently or in the future.

With best regards,


David L. Brown
Mayor